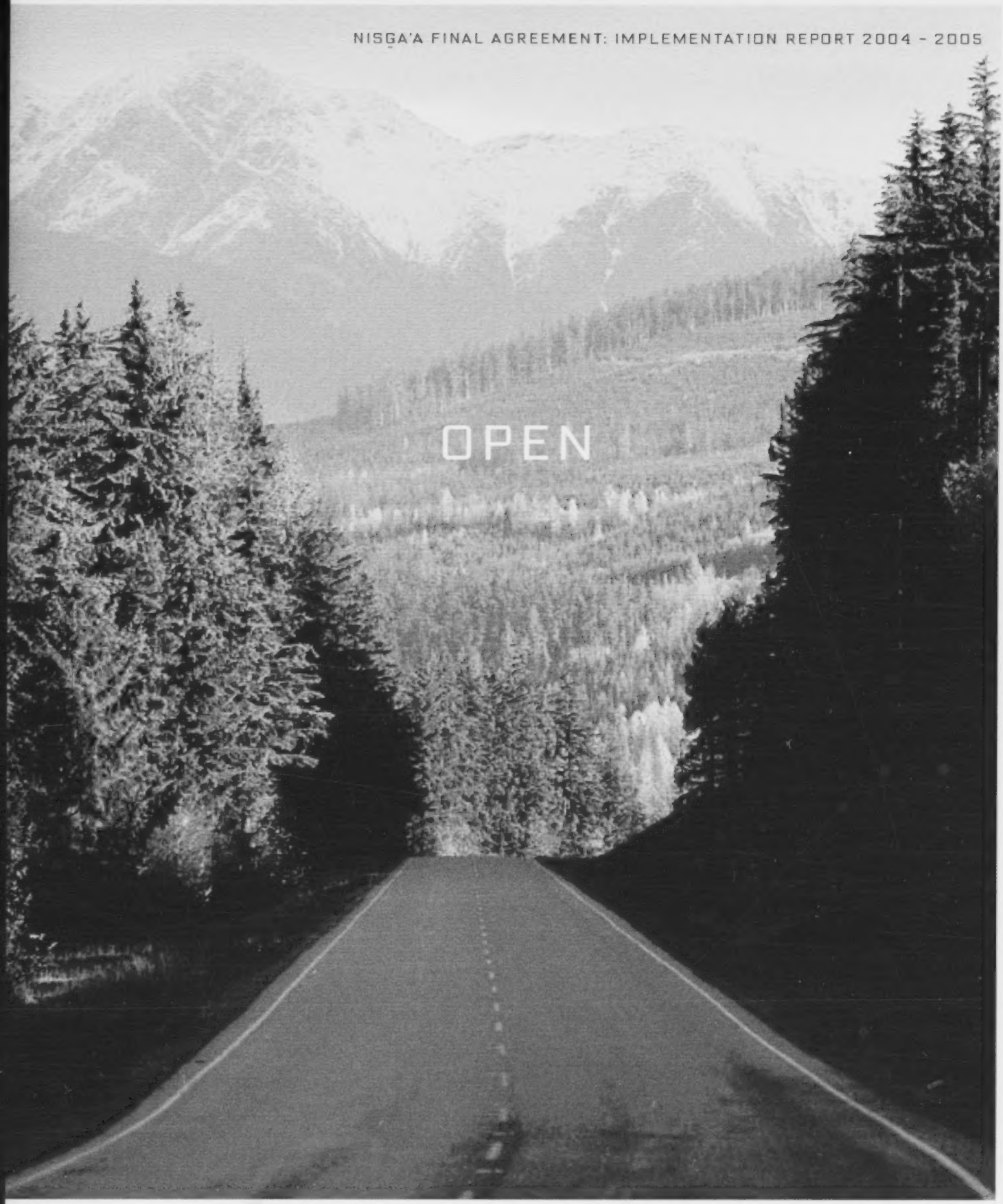
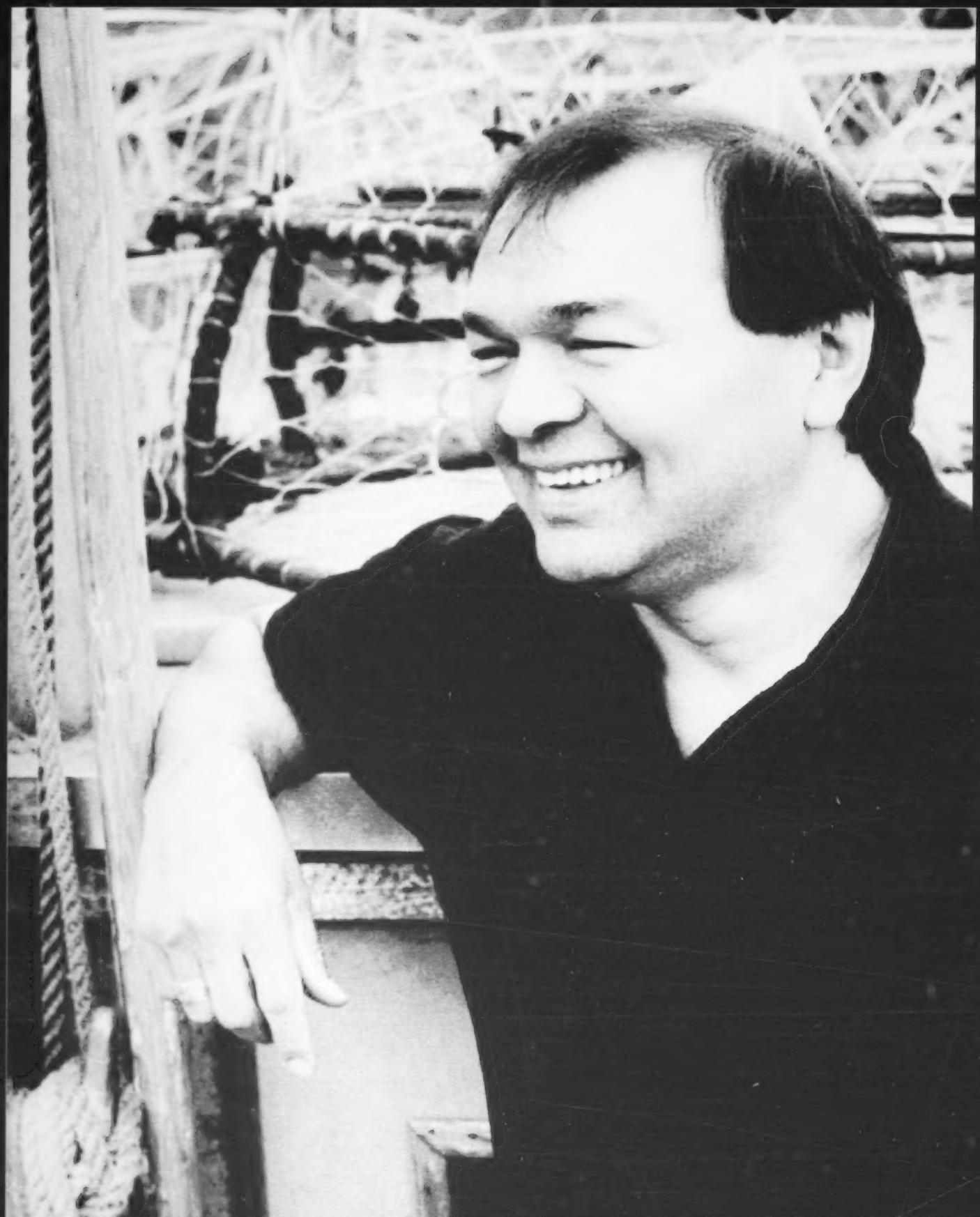

OPEN

"THE NISG̲A'A NATION IS OPEN—OPEN TO OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND PARTNERSHIPS. WE'RE OPEN TO NEW IDEAS."

PRESIDENT NELSON LEESON
SIMOOGIT AX̲LAAWAALS
NISG̲A'A LISIMS GOVERNMENT



OPEN FOR DISCUSSION

# IN CONVERSATION WITH
# PRESIDENT NELSON LEESON

*On October 24th, 2004, Nelson Leeson was elected President of the Nisga'a Nation in the second election under the Nisga'a Final Agreement.*

Q WHY IS THE NISGA'A FINAL AGREEMENT IMPORTANT?

A SIMPLY PUT, THE TREATY ALLOWS US TO MAKE OUR OWN DECISIONS AND TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR OWN LIVES. WE ENJOY OUR SUCCESSES AND LEARN FROM OUR MISTAKES. NOW WE HAVE CONTROL OVER OUR LAND, FORESTS, AND FISHERY AND CAN DEVELOP THEM RESPONSIBLY FOR THE LONG-TERM. THE QUESTION OF OWNERSHIP OF THE LAND IS SETTLED ONCE AND FOR ALL.

I REMEMBER THE HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS OUR PEOPLE HAD IN 2000. THEIR DREAM WAS TO WORK TOWARD SELF-SUFFICIENCY, BUILDING THE ECONOMY IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE REST OF THE NORTHWEST. TREATY-MAKING HAD BEEN A WAY OF LIFE FOR US FOR GENERATIONS — THEN SUDDENLY, IT WAS ALL OVER. I WAS STUNNED. I FELT BOTH EXCITEMENT AND FEAR ABOUT WHERE WE WOULD GO FROM THERE. THE TREATY OFFERS AN ONGOING CHALLENGE — AND WE ARE RISING TO MEET THAT CHALLENGE.

CURRENTLY, WE ARE WORKING TO BUILD OUR ECONOMIC BASE AND TRAIN OUR PEOPLE. WE WELCOME DEVELOPMENT — AS LONG AS IT'S DONE IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SAFE AND SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE WAY. THE NISGA'A NATION IS OPEN — OPEN TO OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND PARTNERSHIPS. WE'RE OPEN TO NEW IDEAS.

WHEN PEOPLE ACCEPT THAT THEIR DESTINY IS IN THEIR OWN HANDS, THEY WILL SEE RESULTS. THE TREATY HAS GIVEN US THE TOOLS WE NEED TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF DEPENDENCE AND EVENTUALLY BECOME CONTRIBUTING, TAX-PAYING MEMBERS OF SOCIETY. AT THE END OF THE DAY, OUR PEOPLE WANT THE SAME THING ALL CANADIANS WANT — THE ABILITY TO DO AND BECOME WHATEVER THEY CHOOSE.

BECAUSE OF OUR TREATY, THE EYES OF THE WORLD ARE UPON US. WE WILL SUCCEED.

SIM-HOOŶSGUM GAT. THIS IS THE LIFE
OF A CHIEFTAIN OR LEADER.

— Ayuukhl Nisga'a

Q WHY IS SELF-GOVERNMENT IMPORTANT?

A BEING ABLE TO GOVERN OURSELVES MEANS BEING ABLE TO SET THE RULES THAT ALLOW US TO LIVE FULL AND PRODUCTIVE LIVES. SELF-GOVERNMENT ALLOWS US TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT FOSTERS SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP, AND A RICH CULTURAL LIFE.

ECONOMICALLY, I THINK IT'S BEEN WISE THAT WE ARE TAKING CONTROL GRADUALLY. WE HAVE TO START CREATING WEALTH BECAUSE SOONER OR LATER WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO START PAYING OUR OWN WAY. IT'S BETTER TO START NOW.

CULTURALLY, OUR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE REVIVING DANCES AND TRADITIONS THAT HAVEN'T BEEN SEEN FOR FIFTY YEARS. THEY DANCE AND WALK IN BOTH WORLDS. OUR GREATEST LEADERS WERE ABLE TO DO THAT. I THINK THAT IS THE FUTURE.

Q WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS?

A LIKE OTHER GOVERNMENTS, WE ARE WORKING TO BUILD OUR ECONOMIC BASE, TRAIN OUR PEOPLE, AND ENSURE THE SEPARATION OF POLITICS AND BUSINESS.

I WANT TO SEE A CLEARLY ESTABLISHED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN. WE'RE WORKING VERY HARD ON THAT NOW. WHEN WE TALK ABOUT SEPARATING POLITICS FROM BUSINESS, WE MEAN CREATING AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD WITH A TOP-NOTCH CEO. I THINK IT'S A MATTER OF PUTTING THAT ACTION PLAN IN PLACE AND STICKING TO IT. WE WILL DEVELOP OUR RESOURCES RESPONSIBLY WITH AN EYE TO THE LONG-TERM AND THE WHOLE.

Q WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES FACING THE NISGA'A NATION TODAY?

A YOU HAVE TO REFLECT ON THE PROCESS OF COLONIZATION. WE WERE SET UP TO BE DEPENDENTS AND WE ARE STUCK IN THIS CYCLE OF DEPENDENCY. OUR CHALLENGE IS TO BREAK THAT CYCLE. WE ALWAYS SAW THE TREATY AS A TOOL TO HELP US TAKE OWNERSHIP OF OUR LIVES AND START WORKING TOWARD BECOMING A SELF-SUFFICIENT PEOPLE AGAIN. THAT'S A BIG CHALLENGE. ON TOP OF THAT, WE'RE WORKING TO SOLVE SOCIAL PROBLEMS LIKE EVERYONE ELSE.

ONE OF OUR LEADERS, JAMES GOSNELL, USED TO SAY, "YOU KNOW, WE'LL SETTLE THE LAND QUESTION. BUT THE REAL WORK BEGINS AFTER IT'S SETTLED." TRUER WORDS WERE NEVER SPOKEN.

## OPEN FOR DISCUSSION

Q WHAT OPPORTUNITIES ARE ON THE HORIZON?

A OUR FISHERY IS DOING VERY WELL. RIGHT NOW THE NASS RIVER IS THE BEST KEPT RIVER SYSTEM IN BRITISH COLUMBIA. WE'VE BEEN TAKING CARE OF THE NASS SINCE 1982 AND WE'RE NURTURING THAT RESOURCE FOR THE BENEFIT OF EVERYONE — NOT JUST NISGA'A PEOPLE. I'M VERY PROUD OF THAT. WHATEVER DEVELOPMENT THAT COMES ALONG, WE HAVE TO ENSURE WE ARE NOT GOING TO THREATEN THE FISHERY. OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, I HOPE TO SEE OUR PEOPLE GET A BETTER PRICE FOR OUR FISH, MAKE DEALS WITH JAPAN, AND IMPROVE HARVESTING AND TRANSPORTATION METHODS.

IN NORTHWEST BRITISH COLUMBIA, THE FOREST INDUSTRY IS STARTING TO SHOW SIGNS OF LIFE AGAIN. I SEE A REALLY BIG OPPORTUNITY FOR US THERE. WE HAVE GOOD EXPERIENCE IN THE AREA OF FORESTRY AND WILL BEGIN TO CREATE WEALTH IN THAT SECTOR.

I BELIEVE THAT WHEN WE MEET, LIVE, AND WORK WITH OTHER PEOPLE, WE ALL LEARN FROM EACH OTHER.

WE'RE ALL STRONGER BECAUSE OF THE EXPERIENCE. CULTURES ARE NOT DORMANT; THEY EVOLVE. AND THEY EVOLVE BY INTERACTION.

WITH THE NEW ROAD OPENING UP THE NASS VALLEY, THERE'S A HUGE OPPORTUNITY IN SPORT FISHING AND OTHER FORMS OF TOURISM. PEOPLE ARE STARTING TO COME UP TO SEE WHAT WE HAVE TO OFFER. IT'S A PLACE OF STUNNING BEAUTY. WE HAVE THE YOUNGEST LAVA BEDS IN CANADA, A PRISTINE RIVER SYSTEM, AND A RICH CULTURE. TO MEET THOSE OPPORTUNITIES, AND TO WELCOME OUR VISITORS, WE WILL NEED TO BUILD AMENITIES LIKE RESTAURANTS, HOTELS, AND MORE BED AND BREAKFASTS. AND AS WE GO FORWARD, WE ARE OPEN TO PARTNERING WITH OUR FELLOW BRITISH COLUMBIANS AND CANADIANS.

TRADITIONALLY, WE'VE BEEN FISHERMEN AND LOGGERS. I WAS BOTH A FISHERMAN AND A LOGGER FOR MANY YEARS. BUT THE WORLD IS CHANGING AND WE ARE CHANGING WITH IT. I GET EXCITED WHEN I THINK ABOUT THE SUCCESS OF VENTURES LIKE ENTEL (THE NEW AIYANSH-BASED HIGH-SPEED INTERNET PROVIDER). WHEN I LOOK AT OUR YOUNG PEOPLE AND WHAT THEY ARE CAPABLE OF DOING, I'M AMAZED. THIS IS JUST A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE.

OF COURSE EDUCATION IS THE BEST INVESTMENT WE CAN MAKE; THAT'S WHY OUR DREAM IS TO BUILD A CAMPUS FOR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION. AND IT'S NOT JUST OUR PEOPLE WHO WOULD BENEFIT. I KNOW PEOPLE FROM OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD WOULD LIKE TO COME AND LIVE AND LEARN IN THIS BEAUTIFUL SETTING. AND THEY WILL BE WELCOMED.

NISGA'A TRAVEL ALL AROUND THE WORLD AND VISITORS COME TO THE NASS VALLEY FROM DISTANT PLACES — AND I THINK WE ARE ENRICHED BY THAT.

Q THE NISGA'A FINAL AGREEMENT IS FIVE YEARS OLD. ARE NISGA'A PEOPLE BETTER OFF?

A I BELIEVE SO. WE HAVE PASSED A NUMBER OF LAWS THAT WILL HELP US BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT. WE ARE STARTING TO UTILIZE SOME OF THE RESOURCES WE SECURED UNDER THE TREATY.

I WOULDN'T WANT MY KIDS TO HAVE TO LIVE THROUGH WHAT I HAD TO LIVE WITH. WE WERE GETTING READY, NEGOTIATING, FOR A LONG TIME. IT BECAME PART OF OUR LIFE. NOW WE ARE PAST NEGOTIATION AND INTO IMPLEMENTATION — GETTING DOWN TO THE BUSINESS OF BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY. SEEING A CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION POLICY FROM THE FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS WOULD GO A LONG WAY TOWARD SUPPORTING OUR ECONOMIC INITIATIVES.

Q WILL THIS FAIL? WILL THE NISGA'A PEOPLE COME BACK FOR MORE MONEY OR SUPPORT?

A WHEN YOU'RE POOR FOR 100 YEARS, AND THEN SUDDENLY YOU HAVE THE ABILITY TO TURN IT AROUND, IT'S GOING TO TAKE A LITTLE WHILE. WE'RE PATIENT. FAILURE ISN'T PART OF OUR LANGUAGE. HOW CAN WE BE WORSE OFF THAN WHERE WE CAME FROM?

WHEN WE SIGNED THE TREATY, WE SAID, "THAT ENDS IT ALL." THROUGHOUT OUR NEGOTIATIONS, WE CLEARLY STATED WHAT WE WANTED. THE TREATY OUTLINED WHAT WE AGREED TO — AND WHAT WE ARE GOING TO LIVE WITH.

UNDER THE TREATY, WE JOIN THE REST OF CANADA AS TAXPAYERS AFTER EIGHT YEARS. WE ARE ALREADY PAYING SOME MUNICIPAL-TYPE TAXES NOW. WE DID A SURVEY BEFORE THE TREATY. WE ASKED OUR PEOPLE, WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO PAY TAXES IF YOU ARE GAINFULLY EMPLOYED? THEY SAID YES — OVERWHELMINGLY — IF THE TAXES ARE USED TO HELP RUN OUR OWN GOVERNMENT.

THE NISGA'A NATION LED BRITISH COLUMBIA AND CANADA IN MODERN TREATY-MAKING.

## NOW WE WANT TO LEAD IN ACCOUNTABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

Q WHAT LESSONS CAN WE DRAW FROM THE NISGA'A TREATY?

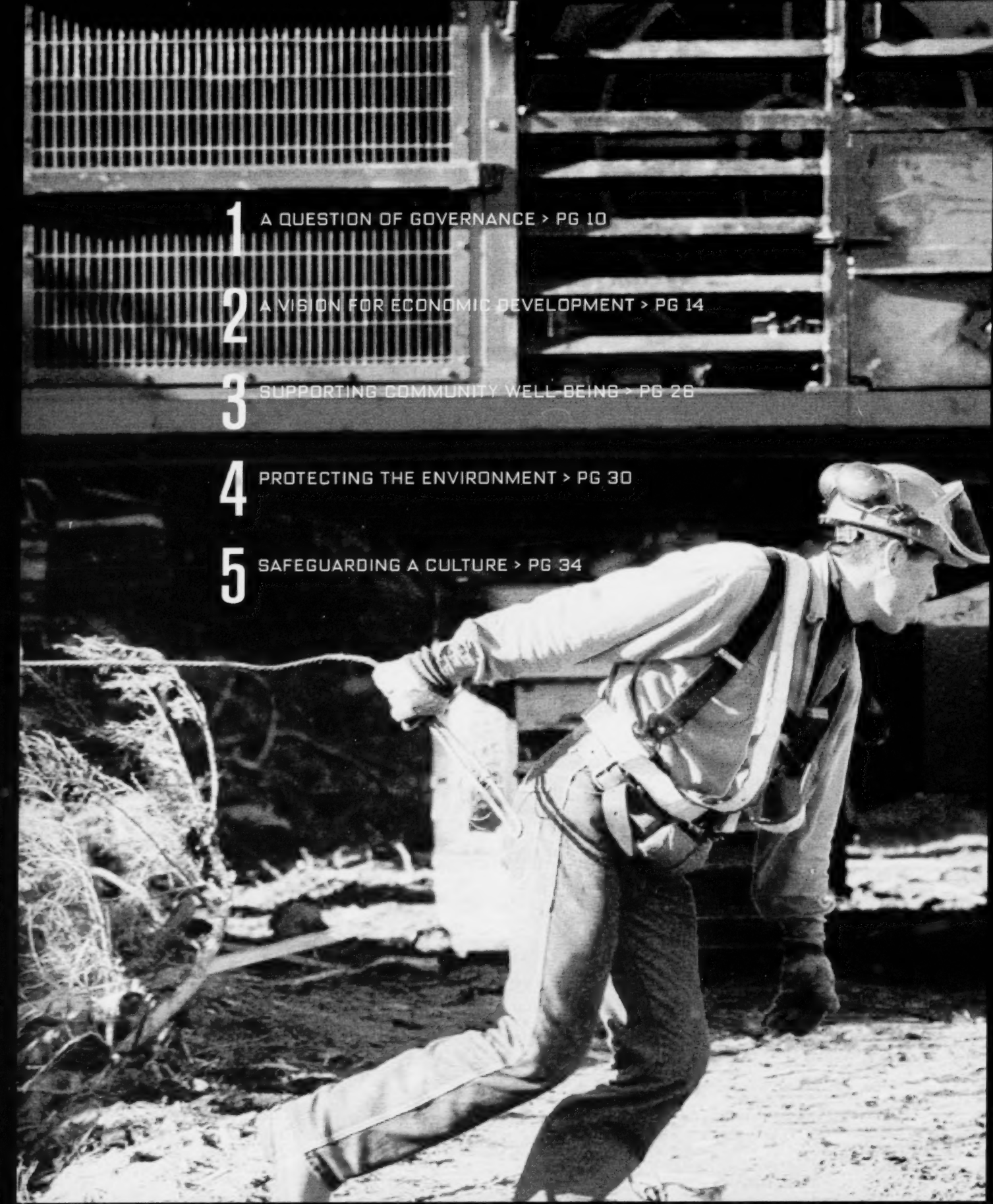
A THEY TOLD US THAT THERE WAS NO ROOM FOR US, THAT ALL THE POWERS HAD BEEN DIVIDED BETWEEN CANADA AND THE PROVINCES. WE HAD TO FIND A WAY TO FIT IN — AND WE DID. THAT'S THE BRILLIANCE OF OUR TREATY. THE NISGA'A FINAL AGREEMENT PROVIDES US THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIP. WE NEVER ADVOCATED SOVEREIGNTY. WE WERE ALWAYS LOOKING TO BECOME MEANINGFUL PARTICIPANTS IN CANADA AND BRITISH COLUMBIA. WE ONLY WANTED A JUST AND HONOURABLE SETTLEMENT.

ACROSS CANADA, OTHER FIRST NATIONS LOOK AT WHAT WE DID AND ASK, "HOW DID YOU DO IT?" YOU JUST DO IT. YOU ARE GOING TO MAKE MISTAKES. IT'S ALMOST AS IF INDIANS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO MAKE MISTAKES. IT'S SILLY. GO OUT THERE AND DO IT. BY TRIAL AND ERROR, YOU'LL GET IT RIGHT OVER TIME. NOTHING'S PERFECT, NO ONE'S PERFECT — WHAT COUNTS IS WORKING HARD TO MAKE IT THE BEST IT CAN BE.

ABOUT PRESIDENT NELSON LEESON

AFTER ATTENDING RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL IN ALBERTA, NELSON LEESON WAS EMPLOYED AS A COMMERCIAL FISHERMAN WHILE SERVING FOUR TERMS AS COUNCILLOR AND TWO TERMS AS CHIEF COUNCILLOR FOR LAXGALTS'AP VILLAGE COUNCIL. MR. LEESON WAS THE EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NISGA'A TRIBAL COUNCIL AND ONE OF THE PRIMARY LAND CLAIM NEGOTIATORS DURING THE FINAL STAGES OF NEGOTIATION OF THE NISGA'A FINAL AGREEMENT.

DURING HIS TENURE WITH NISGA'A TRIBAL COUNCIL, HE SERVED AS CHAIRPERSON OF PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AS CHAIRPERSON OF THE RESOURCE WORKING GROUP. OTHER PUBLIC SERVICE POSTS INCLUDE BOARD MEMBER FOR NORTHERN NATIVE BROADCASTING, PROJECT OUTREACH COORDINATOR FOR NORTH COAST TRIBAL COUNCIL, AND MEMBER OF SKEENA DISTRICT ADVISORY BOARD. MR. LEESON HAS SPENT MORE THAN 20 YEARS IN VARIOUS PUBLIC OFFICES WORKING FOR THE GOOD OF HIS PEOPLE.

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2 A VISION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT > PG 14

3 SUPPORTING COMMUNITY WELL-BEING > PG 26

4 PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT > PG 30

5 SAFEGUARDING A CULTURE > PG 34

# 1 A QUESTION OF GOVERNANCE

**THE PILLARS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE ARE STRONG POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, DEMOCRACY AND TRANSPARENCY, SOUND FISCAL MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY, AND A COMMITMENT TO THE RULE OF LAW. GOOD GOVERNANCE HELPS CREATE THE CONDITIONS THAT MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR OTHER GOVERNMENTS — AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR — TO INVEST IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NISGA'A NATION.**

## DE'ENTKW: LEADERSHIP

The success of any collective venture is due, in part, to the quality of governance. What does it mean to govern? The English word finds its roots in the Greek word *kyberno*, which means "to steer." In Nisga'a culture, the understanding of governance is built on the Ayuukhl Nisga'a — the oral laws and customs of the Nisga'a people — which has been passed down through untold generations. Transcribed for the first time in 2005, the Ayuuk reveals many things about the Nisga'a concept of governance:

"The one who governs is the spokesperson, steersman, and leader of the community... Beginning at birth, one is taught all aspects pertaining to the ways in which the world functions, so when it is time to take one's place as the leader of the community, one will know how to carry out those responsibilities based on the Nisga'a Principles of Life: respect, humility, compassion, patience, clear thinking, active listening, and taking care of how one speaks. This is the life of a chieftain or leader."

Today, Nisga'a leaders draw on an understanding of good governance from timeless local tradition and more than a century of experience seeking an equitable settlement with the governments of Canada and British Columbia. Tradition and experience demonstrate that good governance creates stability, transparency, and accountability. It fosters a positive climate for sustainable economic and social development.

## GAT: A PEOPLE

The Nisga'a Nation's lands, resources, and jurisdictions are located in the Nass River Valley in northwest British Columbia. Nisga'a people belong to one of four tribes: Eagle (Laxsgiik), Killer Whale (Gisk'aast), Raven (Ganada) and Wolf (Laxgibuu). As a member of a particular tribe, each Nisga'a citizen also belongs to a tribal house (Wilp). In Nisga'a culture, traditional authority and the ability to govern originate from the connection between families and communities, and their land and resources.

Today, the Nisga'a Nation includes 5,980 people. Nisga'a people reside in the communities of Gingolx (Kincolith), Laxgalts'ap (Greenville), Gitwinksihlkw (Canyon City) and New Aiyansh. Many Nisga'a people also live outside the Nass Valley in Terrace, Prince Rupert/Port Edward, and greater Vancouver. Nisga'a citizens living in these urban centres are represented through Nisga'a "Urban Societies." Nisga'a people also reside in 70 other communities in British Columbia, the Yukon Territory, six other provinces, and the United States.

## TS'EETS'ISK: A PLACE

Nisga'a Lands are owned in fee simple and consist of approximately 2,000 square kilometres encompassing all four Nisga'a villages. The Nisga'a Nation owns all mineral resources on or under Nisga'a Lands. The Nisga'a Nation also owns 25 square kilometres of Category "A" Lands consisting of 18 parcels, and 2.5 square kilometres of Category "B" Lands consisting of 15 parcels. These lands are located throughout the Nass Area. The Nisga'a Nation owns all mineral resources on or under Category "A" Lands, while British Columbia owns all mineral resources on or under Category "B" Lands.

A land regime has been established to oversee the development of Nisga'a Lands. The Lisims Land Registry and the Nisga'a Land Title Office administer all matters related to Nisga'a Lands.

## THE NISGA'A FINAL AGREEMENT

With the ratification of the Nisga'a Final Agreement on May 11, 2000, most provisions of the *Indian Act* ceased to apply to the Nisga'a people. The treaty puts to rest any doubt about the ownership of Nisga'a Lands and assures the right of self-government for the Nisga'a Nation.

A milestone in the relationship between Canada, British Columbia, and its First Nations peoples, the Nisga'a Final Agreement is being studied by Aboriginal peoples and governments the world over.

## CAPITAL TRANSFER

The cash component of the Nisga'a Final Agreement is called the Capital Transfer. The amount agreed to was $190 million, to be paid by Canada and British Columbia to the Nisga'a Nation over a 14-year period. The future value at the end of the payment period will be approximately $280,500,000. The Nisga'a Nation borrowed $50 million for treaty negotiations and agreed to repay the loan over the same 14-year period. The total loan repayment amount, plus interest charges, at the end of the repayment period will be approximately $84,300,000.

During the reporting period, capital transfer payments of $12,023,468 from Canada and $989,373.15 from British Columbia were made to the Nisga'a Nation. Nisga'a Lisims Government repaid $2 million toward its negotiation loan.

The Fiscal Financing Agreement (FFA) provides the Nisga'a Nation with agreed-upon programs and services funding. Nisga'a citizens are able to participate in programs established by Canada and British Columbia that are not included in the FFA. During the reporting period, the parties prepared to conduct negotiations to reach a new FFA.

## GOVERNMENT JURISDICTION AND LAWMAKING AUTHORITY

The Nisga'a Final Agreement provides certainty with respect to the Nisga'a people's right of self-government and includes self-government provisions. Under the Nisga'a Final Agreement, the Nisga'a government has the ability to pass laws on a broad range of matters. At the same time, Nisga'a jurisdiction over lawmaking authority is concurrent with federal or provincial legislative authority.

In practice, this means that for every Nisga'a law, there is often a federal or provincial law that deals with the same subject matter. Therefore, the Nisga'a Final Agreement sets out the rules for determining which law prevails if there is an inconsistency or conflict. Generally, Nisga'a laws prevail when those laws deal with matters that are internal to the Nisga'a Nation, integral to Nisga'a culture, and essential to the operation of Nisga'a Government.

Under the Nisga'a Final Agreement, Nisga'a laws prevail in 21 subject matters and federal or provincial laws prevail in 13 subject matters. There are also certain areas — national defence for example — over which Nisga'a Government has no lawmaking authority.

## GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

Nisga'a government is composed of Nisga'a Lisims Government (NLG) and the four Nisga'a Village Governments. It is designed to assure democracy, transparency, and accountability. The NLG Executive consists of the Officers, the Chief Councillor of each Nisga'a Village Government, and one representative from each Nisga'a Urban Society. The President, Chairperson, Secretary-Treasurer, and Chairperson of the Council of Elders are elected at-large by the Nisga'a Nation and serve as Officers of NLG. Members of each Nisga'a Village Government are elected by Nisga'a citizens resident in that particular village while representatives of each Nisga'a Urban Society are elected by Nisga'a citizens resident in that particular urban area.

Nisga'a Lisims Government's legislative assembly, known as Wilp Si'ayuukhl Nisga'a, is composed of NLG's Officers, the Chief Councillor and Councillors of each Nisga'a Village Government, and the two representatives from each Nisga'a Urban Society for a total of 37 members. Wilp Si'ayuukhl Nisga'a has enacted 53 Nisga'a laws, passed numerous resolutions, and debated governance issues. Included in the 53 laws are 25 Statute Amendment Acts that have amended or repealed sections of various Nisga'a laws. Nisga'a Lisims Government maintains a public registry of Nisga'a laws, and provides copies to Canada and British Columbia.

During the reporting period, there were four sittings of the Wilp Si'ayuukhl Nisga'a: March 30, 31, and April 1, 2004; June 28–30, 2004; November 15 and 16, 2004; March 30, 31, and April 1, 2005. In addition to amending existing legislation, two new pieces of legislation were passed, the *Nisga'a Emergency Program Act* and the *Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a Institute Act*.

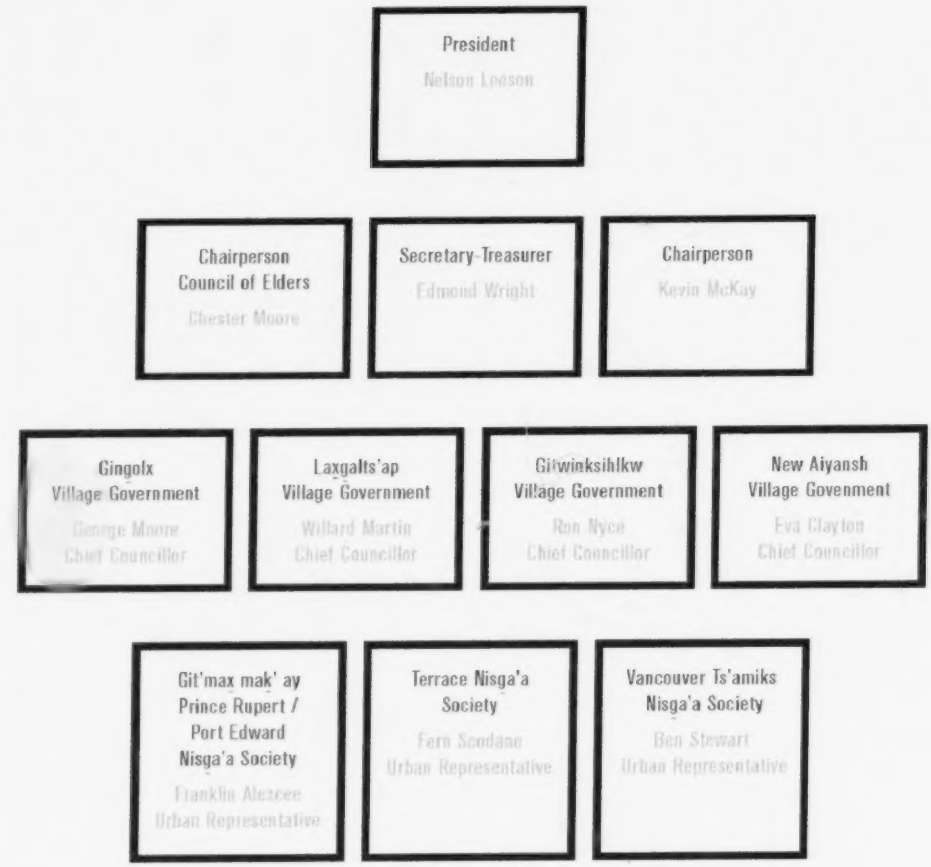
***Nisga'a Emergency Program Act*** allows the Nisga'a Nation to design and implement its own response and recovery plan for natural or human threats that may occur within Nisga'a Lands. The Act calls on the Nisga'a Nation to continue building human resource capacity to ensure immediate and effective response measures are taken in the event of an emergency.

***Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a Institute Act*** recognizes and establishes Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a (WWN) as a Nisga'a post-secondary institution with the authority to award certificates, diplomas, and degrees. The Act also formalizes a reporting relationship between WWN and NLG to ensure cooperation in advancing the economic development goals of the Nisga'a Nation, as well as promoting the preservation of Nisga'a language and culture.

# ROLES OF GOVERNMENT

ABOVE AND BEYOND PUBLIC SAFETY, CITIZENS OF FREE SOCIETIES LOOK TO THEIR GOVERNMENTS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, SOCIAL SERVICES, ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP, AND CULTURAL SUPPORT.

TOGETHER WITH ITS PARTNERS, CANADA AND BRITISH COLUMBIA, NISGA'A LISIMS GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO MEETING THOSE RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS WHILE SETTING NEW STANDARDS FOR FIRST NATIONS GOVERNANCE.




Nisga'a Lisims Government Executive

Nisga'a Lisims Government Senior Management

# 2 A VISION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

NOW THAT THE NISGA'A NATION'S LAND AND RESOURCES ARE SECURE, THE NISGA'A PEOPLE AND THEIR GOVERNMENT ARE INVESTING THEIR ENERGIES IN BUILDING CAPACITY, EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES, AND DEVELOPING THEIR ECONOMY.

## A PRINCIPLED PATH

Long ago, the Ayuukhl Nisga'a identified a fundamental goal behind the drive to create wealth:

"Creating wealth — the capability and resources — guides our decision about the appropriate course of action. This will help us achieve the freedom to stand on our own."

— Ayuukhl Nisga'a

In 1987, the United Nation's Brundtland Commission (*World Commission on Environment and Development*) addressed the challenges of development in a global context. The commission's report popularized the term "sustainable development," which it defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Today, these complementary principles guide NLG's vision for economic development, sustainability, and self-sufficiency.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In 2003, Skeena Native Development Society compiled a Labour Market Census that found an unemployment rate of 52% among Nisga'a people (age 15–65) living in the Nass Valley. Although this was a sharp decrease from 2000's unemployment rate of nearly 69%, there is still much work to do. The census also found that the majority of unemployed Nisga'a are seeking employment. This reality poses both an incredible challenge and opportunity for the development of the Nisga'a Nation.

The Nisga'a Nation seeks to support traditional culture while cultivating new ways of economic and entrepreneurial thinking. To achieve these goals, Nisga'a Lisims Government is exploring and strengthening partnerships in resource development on Nisga'a Lands, including fisheries, forestry, botanical forest products, gravel export, eco-tourism, and exploration of "green" hydroelectricity production. In addition to natural resource development, NLG is investing in state-of-the-art telecommunication infrastructure through enTel, a Nisga'a-owned and operated high-speed Internet provider that is poised to expand service across northwest British Columbia.

Beyond developing its own land, resources, and potential, the Nisga'a Nation has identified the following possible commercial ventures in northwest British Columbia.

- Prince Rupert's container port
- Prince Rupert's cruise ship terminal
- Kitimat's liquid natural gas plant
- The northwest natural gas pipeline, and
- Bowser Basin coal bed methane gas.

Nisga'a Lisims Government is working to mobilize the Nisga'a labour pool to engage in these and other development opportunities.

## ENTEL: HIGH SPEED SUCCESS

One of the most remarkable economic success stories in the Nass Valley has been the development of enTel — a classic example of necessity inspiring invention.

enTel
*everywhere*

Since the Effective Date of the Nisga'a Final Agreement, Nisga'a Lisims Government has identified the need to bring high-speed Internet access to the Nass Valley to support both economic and social development of the Nisga'a Nation. When NLG first tried to provide this service to its communities, it encountered a major roadblock — the same one encountered by remote and rural residents everywhere. The big carriers said their villages were too small and too far from an urban centre to justify offering service at a reasonable price. Realizing that it would be cheaper to build it themselves, NLG created enTel Communications Inc., which is now bringing broadband Internet access to the Nass Valley and beyond. enTel's original mission was to connect all four Nisga'a communities to a fibre optic network and gain competitive access to Terrace. During the reporting period, enTel continued to expand service to Nisga'a citizens and public institutions as well as launch service to other remote, rural, and underserved communities in northwest British Columbia. Through new international partnerships, enTel is fast positioning itself to become one of the primary service providers to Aboriginal communities across North America.

## GOVERNANCE AND BUSINESS

Since May 11, 2000 — the Effective Date of the Nisga'a Final Agreement — Nisga'a Lisims Government has created Nisga'a corporations to fulfill specific needs, such as selling fish (Nisga'a Fisheries Ltd.), managing forest resources (Lisims Forest Resources Ltd.), and building telecommunications (enTel). Now that these corporations are up and running, NLG is committed to establishing an economic development board to oversee these and other opportunities. This process began during the reporting period and NLG aims to have a CEO and board of directors in place in 2006. While Nisga'a government will continue its role of facilitating and promoting development, the day-to-day running of these entities will be outside the purview of elected officials, freeing them to concentrate on governance while allowing those with proven business acumen to move the economy forward.

## DEVELOPING A HEALTHY FISHING INDUSTRY

The Nisga'a Nation manages the Nass River Fishery to preserve the resource, provide food for its people, and to support a modern, sustainable fishing industry for present and future generations. Under the Nisga'a Final Agreement, Nisga'a fishing rights can be exercised in Nisga'a traditional territory and the marine waters of Portland Canal and Observatory Inlet. Known as the Nass Area, this region encompasses 26,838 square kilometres. The Nisga'a fish entitlements are held by the Nisga'a Nation and the nation has the right to sell salmon harvested in accordance with the treaty.

The Nisga'a Fisheries Management Program has been in place since 1992, well before treaty negotiations reached an Agreement-in-Principle. The program utilizes six fish wheels on the Nass River for salmon monitoring, tagging, and data collection. Nisga'a Fisheries also conducts assessment of non-salmon species. All management data collected is shared with Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). The Nisga'a Nation has now concluded five seasons of harvesting all species of salmon for domestic use and sale.

Under the Nisga'a Final Agreement, management of the Nisga'a fisheries is facilitated through the Joint Fisheries Management Committee. Comprised of representatives from Canada, British Columbia, and Nisga'a Lisims Government, the committee recommends the Nisga'a annual fishing plan to the DFO. Funding of the various fisheries projects come from the three governments.

The Nisga'a Final Agreement allows for the commercial sale of salmon and this new revenue has enabled Nisga'a communities to benefit both culturally and economically. In addition to the harvest for domestic consumption, Nisga'a citizens are eligible to participate in the Individual Sales Fishery, which allows for the commercial sale of fish, and the Communal Sales Fishery where fish are sold to fund the work of Nisga'a Fisheries Management Program.

SALMON HARVESTED SINCE 2000

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2000 | SOCKEYE | 54,734[1] | $900,000[3] |
| 2001 | SOCKEYE | 37,933[1] | $386,126[3] |
| 2002 | SOCKEYE | 67,918[1] | $833,781[3] |
| | COHO | 2,425[1] | |
| 2003 | SOCKEYE | 85,784[1] | $984,708[3] |
| | COHO | 10,917[1] | |
| 2004 | SOCKEYE | 91,428[1] | $1,177,903[3] |
| | COHO | 10,254[1] | |

*In 2000 and 2001 only sockeye were harvested*
*[1]Individual fish [3]Revenue to the local economy*

### Year in Review

During the reporting period, Nisga'a Fisheries Management Program conducted stock and habitat assessment and enhancement, sockeye lake studies, chinook/coho escapement studies, catch monitoring for salmon and non-salmon species, sport fishery monitoring, stock indicator studies, and a patrol charter for the commercial fishery. British Columbia granted $18,000 to NLG for a Nass River Steelhead Radio Telemetry study to be initiated in the summer of 2005.

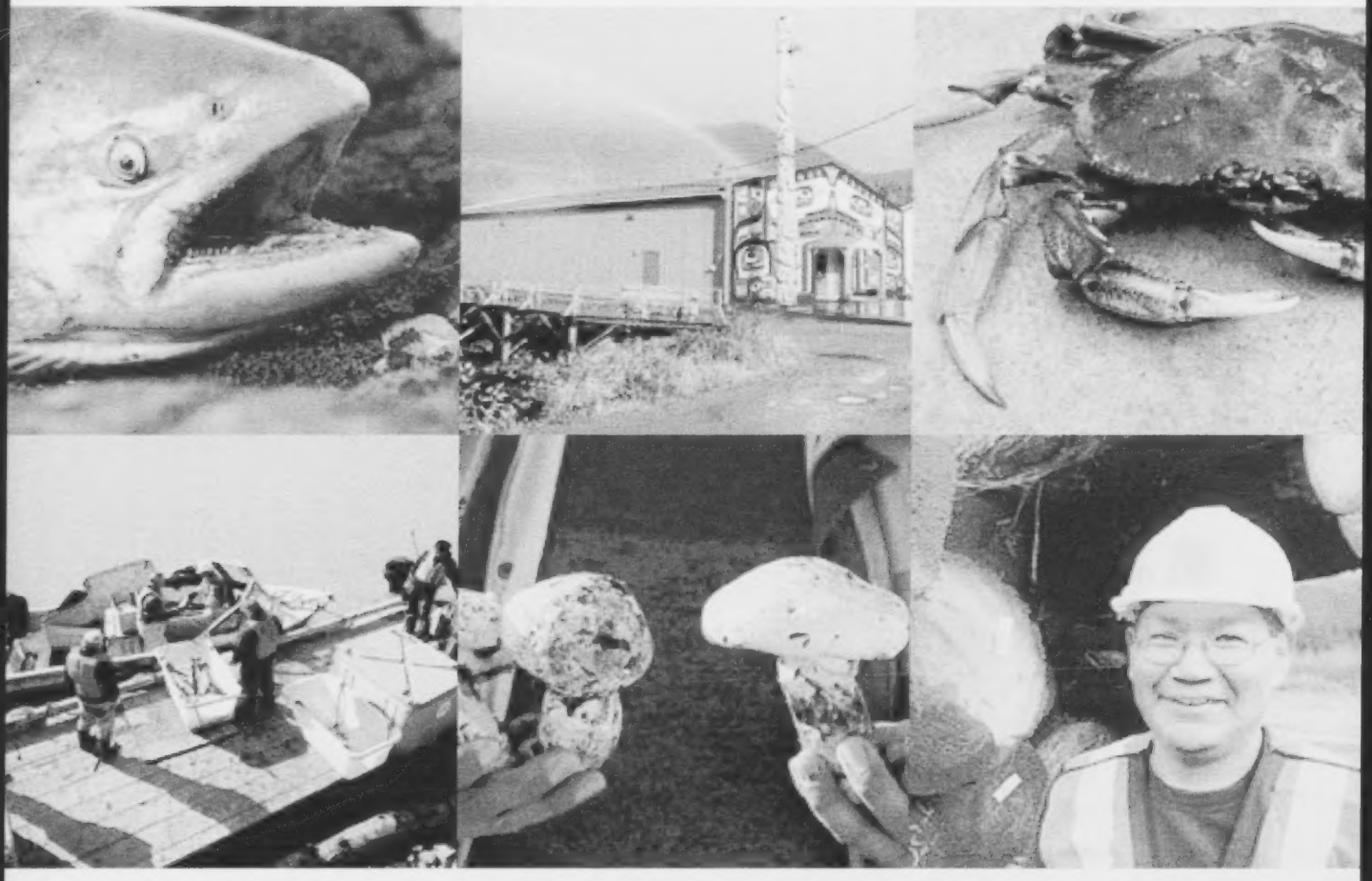
During the 2004 season, 370 Individual Sale fishing permits were sold to Nisga'a citizens. An additional 67 Individual Sale permits were issued to elders free of charge. A total of 110,545 salmon were caught, which represents $846,778 in revenue to Nisga'a fishers. The Communal Sales Fishery harvested 32,031 salmon, generating $340,809 for Nisga'a Fisheries. The domestic food fishery totalled 40,657 salmon.

Immediately after the Effective Date of the Nisga'a Final Agreement, Nisga'a Fisheries Ltd. entered into a five-year agreement with Canadian Fishing Company to purchase Nisga'a salmon. During the reporting period, Nisga'a Fisheries concluded negotiations for a new five-year sale/purchase agreement.

### Goals

- Remain within the 2004 chinook allocation.
- Continue assessment of smaller Nass Area stocks of sockeye.
- Ensure the fishery is managed so that harvests for domestic purposes have priority over harvests for sale.
- Maximize the value of harvests.
- Provide opportunities for communal fisheries where salmon may be sold for the benefit of the Nisga'a Nation.
- Maximize employment for Nisga'a citizens.

# HA'AMWIL... DIM G̱AN DIP DI'AK



## CREATING WEALTH... THIS WILL HE
## TO STAND ON OUR OWN.

# ḴHLKWHL DIM LIP HITGUË.

# ḶP US ACHIEVE THE FREEDOM

## BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FOREST INDUSTRY

Under the Nisga'a Final Agreement, the Nisga'a Nation has control over its lands and forests. Nisga'a Lisims Government is managing the harvest of forest products on Nisga'a Lands to provide employment for Nisga'a people today and for future generations.

### Forestry Transition Period

During the first five years of the treaty, control of timber harvesting and management on Nisga'a Lands was transferred from British Columbia to Nisga'a Lisims Government. During the transition period, British Columbia licenced the harvest of timber to forest companies who held licences prior to the Effective Date of the Nisga'a Final Agreement. Responsibility for the administration of these licences was shared between British Columbia and NLG. During the reporting period, NLG's Forest Resources Department worked to prepare for the end of the transition period and full control of forest resources in May 2005.

### Year in Review

Poor global market conditions, limited local processing facilities, and the ongoing softwood lumber dispute between Canada and the U.S. continued to have a negative impact on the forest industry in northwest British Columbia.

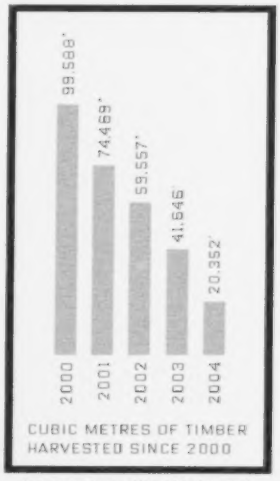
Under the authority of the *Nisga'a Forest Act*, harvesting took place on seven cut blocks and a Harvest Billing System report shows that 20,352 cubic metres of wood were harvested, using a combination of conventional and helicopter logging. This represented more than 500 truckloads.

In February 2005, the Forest Practices Board completed its fourth annual audit of forest planning and practices on Nisga'a Lands. The Board reported that the timber harvesting, silviculture, road maintenance and forest health activities carried out by licencees complied in all significant respects with the requirements of the *Forest Practices Code* and the *Nisga'a Final Agreement*. However, the report did raise concerns about the timely fulfilment of New Skeena Forest Products (NSF) existing obligations and these concerns are shared by British Columbia.

The Kalum Forest District continues to monitor and report on the state of the roads and cut-blocks and worked closely with Nisga'a Lisims Government to deal with this matter. As part of the plan, all roads will be assessed and repaired during the next reporting period.

For the reporting period, for timber harvested on Nisga'a Lands, British Columbia transferred quarterly Same Economic Position (SEP) payments totalling $654,130.48 to Nisga'a Lisims Government. Under the SEP arrangement, NLG receives payments equivalent to those it would have received if it had managed the timber harvest itself.

As softwood lumber markets improve, NLG is working to ensure forest employment will be available on a seasonal and permanent basis on Nisga'a Lands. Opportunities will include positions in silviculture, logging, hauling, engineering, timber development, quality control, scaling, road and bridge maintenance, and management.




*155,000 cu m allowable harvest
*135,000 cu m allowable harvest

### Lisims Forest Resources Ltd.

In 2003, Nisga'a Lisims Government created Lisims Forest Resources Ltd. to manage the forest resources on Nisga'a Lands. A business plan has been developed and operation will commence at the end of the Forest Transition Period (May 2005). During the reporting period, marketing arrangements were made between Lisims Forest Resources and Alcan Forest Products, which has experience selling forest products to China, Japan, and Korea.

### Botanical Forest Products

Pine mushroom harvesting is regulated and monitored on Nisga'a Lands through the sale of permits to Nisga'a and non-Nisga'a harvesters and buyers. Each fall since 1988, pine mushroom harvesting has been a significant contributor to the Nisga'a economy. NLG's 2004 Botanical Forest Products Management Plan identified three objectives: sustainable management, compliance with Nisga'a legislation, and increased awareness of the economic opportunities of mushroom harvesting among Nisga'a citizens.

Revenue generated from the 2004 season dropped significantly from the previous year. This is attributable to the shorter season and reduced buyer activity. In addition, international mushroom prices fell to unprecedented low levels. These factors, along with an oversupply in southern British Columbia, contributed to a negative result for the season.

Lisims Forest Resources is working with Misty Mountain Industries of Richmond to increase the value of botanical forest products collected on Nisga'a Lands. During the reporting period, the partners successfully implemented a pilot project that helped hire pickers and outlined objectives for the 2005 season.

MUSHROOMS HARVESTED SINCE 2000

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2000 | 13,620 KG | $0.4 MILLION |
| 2001 | 27,216 KG | $1.3 MILLION |
| 2002 | 23,000 KG | $1.0 MILLION |
| 2003 | 45,360 KG | $1.0 MILLION |
| 2004 | 12,000 KG | $0.15 MILLION |

*Kilograms harvested*
*Revenue to the local economy*

### Goals

- Increase employment.
- Increase value-added opportunities for non-timber forest products.
- Upgrade, maintain, and construct infrastructure to allow harvest operations.
- Increase utilization of timber products.
- Increase harvesting of botanical forest products.

## MANAGING NISGA'A LANDS

The Lands Department of Nisga'a Lisims Government is entrusted with the resources of Nisga'a Lands, excluding forests, fish, and wildlife. The Lands Department works to ensure that management of Nisga'a Lands is economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable, and that the Nisga'a Nation receives the best and highest return on its interests.

### Year in Review

During the reporting period, there were two prominent applications for use of Nisga'a Lands: an application for a licence of occupation for a fish landing site and an application for a licence of occupation for a small agricultural farm and greenhouse. The first was approved and the second will be considered for approval in the next fiscal year.

British Columbia environmental assessments for land use on Crown lands within or abutting the Nass Area began on the following projects: Klappan Coal, Bear River Gravel, and Swamp Point Gravel. All three assessments are in preliminary stages. NLG will be monitoring the environmental assessment process to ensure Nisga'a interests are not affected. NLG may become more involved as the assessment moves forward. (See "Protecting the Environment," pg. 30).

During the reporting period, British Columbia completed a survey of portions of Nisga'a Lands boundaries and awarded survey contracts for the Nisga'a Highway Corridor and Nisga'a Lands boundaries.

### Hydroelectric Potential

The Nisga'a Nation holds two water reservations on Nisga'a Lands for a period of 20 years after the Effective Date of the Nisga'a Final Agreement: the Nisga'a Water Reservation (for domestic, industrial and agricultural purposes), and the Nisga'a Hydro Power Reservation (which covers all the unrecorded waters of all streams — other than the Nass River — that are wholly or partially within Nisga'a Lands).

NLG's Lands and Resources Department has been collecting water flow data on a number of streams to determine the feasibility of both domestic and commercial "green" hydroelectric projects. During the reporting period, it was determined that two streams are suitable for development under the Nisga'a Hydro Power Reservation.

With energy generating capacity, Nisga'a communities would have an important asset to attract business to the Nass Valley. This project has the potential to not only meet the electricity needs of the Nisga'a Nation, but also provide NLG with the opportunity to sell surplus power back to the provincial grid.

### Goals

- Develop a pesticide use policy.
- Finalize the Nisga'a Lands boundary surveys.
- Clearly mark the outer Nisga'a Lands boundary where it crosses roads.
- Erect entrance portals on the Nisga'a Highway on both the route to Terrace and at Gingolx.
- Continue to explore the feasibility of hydroelectric development.

## INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE

Building infrastructure — particularly roads — is critical to the development of the Nisga'a Nation. Improving transportation increases safety, strengthens ties between Nisga'a communities and the outside world, and promotes economic development.

Before the conclusion of negotiations for the Nisga'a Final Agreement, the existing roads into the Nass Valley were in poor condition and road access to the village of Gingolx (Kincolith) was non-existent. The Nisga'a Nation negotiated an independent agreement with British Columbia to address transportation needs. British Columbia has allocated $52 million to upgrade and pave the Nisga'a Highway from Lava Lake to New Aiyansh, Nass Camp, and Laxgalts'ap. At the end of the reporting period, $41 million of the total had been spent.

Canada, British Columbia, and the Nisga'a Nation together funded $34 million to construct a new 28-kilometre gravel highway from Laxgalts'ap to Kincolith. The new highway was open to the public in December 2002. The highway to Kincolith has since been upgraded with a seal coat surface to reduce maintenance costs.

These infrastructure projects have brought employment and new skills to Nisga'a communities — skills that are being put to work both at home and outside the Nass Valley. Highway construction projects continue to provide employment for Nisga'a citizens as labourers, heavy equipment operators, flag persons, and in provisioning construction camps. Up to 60% of the jobs created have been filled by Nass Valley residents.

### Goals

The final phase of the Nisga'a Highway Upgrade Project is budgeted at $10.5 million. This work, slated for completion in spring 2006, includes:

- Grade work and paving – Lava Beds to Nass Camp (42 km)
- Paving – West end of Lava Beds to Kwinyarh Creek (7.285 km)
- Paving – Nisga'a Highway to Gitwinksihlkw Village boundary (1.5 km)
- Paving – Nisga'a Highway to New Aiyansh Village boundary (0.7 km)
- Paving – Nisga'a Highway into Nass Camp (0.8 km)

## PROMOTING TOURISM

Nisga'a Lands abound with tourism potential — soaring mountains, dramatic lava beds, picturesque fjords, and thriving rivers and streams. The natural beauty of Nisga'a Lands is complemented by the Nisga'a Nation's rich cultural traditions. With the improvements to the Nisga'a Highway and the completion of the extension to Kincolith, visitors are arriving from across Canada and around the world to explore Nisga'a Lands and the Nass Area.

### Anhluut'ukwsim Laxmihl Angwinga'asanskwhl Nisga'a

Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Park

Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Park is a Class "A" provincial park that encompasses 179 square kilometres. The park is jointly managed by the Nisga'a Nation and British Columbia, and each party appoints three members as their representatives on a Joint Park Management Committee. British Columbia funds an agreement for services and maintenance within the park. The agreement is valued at $40,000 annually, plus revenues. British Columbia is also seeking a partnership to create a lava bed entrance portal with a carved totem pole. This two-to-three-year project will be funded, in part, by British Columbia.

The number of campers visiting the park increased for the third year in a row.

### Commercial Recreation Tenure

The Nisga'a Nation has a Commercial Recreation Tenure within the Nass Area for a term of 27 years which commenced immediately after the Effective Date of the Nisga'a Final Agreement. To capitalize on this opportunity, Nisga'a Lisims Government has developed a management plan and has consulted with Ecotrust Canada to determine the best way of moving forward. Ecotrust Canada has proposed conducting a workshop with tourism specialists and interested Nisga'a citizens and government members. Goals of the workshop will include identifying the components that would constitute the Nisga'a Nation's tourism industry, estimate cost and feasibility, and create a three-year plan.

### External Opportunities

During the reporting period, representatives of Nisga'a Lisims Government met a new neighbour, the purchaser of Kitsault, an unoccupied town located within the Nass Wildlife Area. A decommissioned mining town, Kitsault is only 40 kilometres (as the crow flies) from New Aiyansh and is accessed by road through Nisga'a Lands. Under the Nisga'a Final Agreement, the Nisga'a Nation has certain rights and interests throughout this general area, including the fee simple ownership of adjacent lands, access rights, fish and wildlife harvesting rights, backcountry recreation tenures, commercial recreation areas, and environmental assessment and protection rights.

Kitsault could prove to be an excellent base for wilderness tourism and offer good partnership opportunities for Nisga'a citizens and other residents of northwest British Columbia. The new owner was presented with a copy of NLG's Commercial Recreation Tenure Management Plan and a positive working relationship was established. Nisga'a Lisims Government looks forward to working with the owner of Kitsault in realizing the potential of the region.

### Goals

- Increase the number of visitors to the Nisga'a Nation.
- Create an entrance portal at Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Park.
- Identify targets and goals and produce a three-year plan with Ecotrust Canada.
- Explore tourism partnerships throughout northwest British Columbia.

- Roads and Highways
- Nisga'a Highway
- Nisga'a Highway Kincolith Extension Project
- Nass Area (includes Nass Wildlife Area)
- Nass Wildlife Area (includes Nisga'a Lands)
- Nisga'a Lands
- Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Park (Anhluut'ukwsim Laxmihl Angwinga'asanskwhl Nisga'a)
- Gingietl Creek Ecological Reserve No. 115
- Waterways

*This map is not to scale and is for general information purposes only. Within the area of detail there are private lands owned by the Nisga'a Nation and others (not shown).*

# 3 SUPPORTING COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

**RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WELL-BEING OF OTHERS HAS ALWAYS BEEN PARAMOUNT IN NISGA'A CULTURE. THE NISGA'A FINAL AGREEMENT ALLOWS NISGA'A PEOPLE TO ONCE AGAIN MEET THAT RESPONSIBILITY IN CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE WAYS.**

## PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Under the Nisga'a Final Agreement, Nisga'a Lisims Government manages an array of social services and programs, including health, education, and child and family services. Together with Canada and British Columbia, Nisga'a Lisims Government is investing in Nisga'a communities by developing and strengthening these programs.

"It is our responsibility to ensure quality, healthy living in our midst. This is achieved by helping each other and showing kindness to each other."

— Ayuukhl Nisga'a

## NISGA'A CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

Nisga'a Lisims Government provides service options to ensure the protection and well-being of Nisga'a children consistent with both the Ayuukhl Nisga'a and British Columbia statutes and policies. By maintaining the Nisga'a family through the utilization of the Ayuuk, Nisga'a Child and Family Services (NCFS) hopes to ensure the spiritual, physical, mental, emotional, and cultural well-being of all Nisga'a children.

NCFS provides support services for families, which promote sound parenting practices and respite care. Voluntary Care Agreements allow parents to place their children in a safe, approved home for a temporary period if they are unable to care for their children during medical treatment or training. Special Needs Agreements provided by NCFS ensure the safe care of children with special needs.

NCFS approves and provides ongoing support payments to adults who provide foster care for Nisga'a children, on both a temporary and permanent basis, in Nisga'a Family Care Homes. NCFS also provides family support services, a recreation program, youth worker program, community workshops, a speech therapist, Drug Awareness Resistance Education, and a psychologist.

Since the Effective Date of the treaty, NCFS has:

- directly served 400 Nisga'a children
- opened 90 Nisga'a care homes
- opened two Nisga'a Family Care Homes
- invested in youth centres in each community
- launched a summer daycare program, and
- provided wilderness excursions for high-risk youth.

### Goals

- Complete transfer of delegated services from British Columbia, including voluntary services, guardianship services, and child protection.
- Initiate child welfare legislation.
- Negotiate delegation agreements for adoptions from British Columbia.
- Transfer other services for children and families from British Columbia to Nisga'a Child and Family Services.
- Ensure allied services (family advocate, speech therapist, addiction counsellor) are in place for children and families.
- Achieve a levelling off — if not a reduction — in the use of guardianship services over the next five years, as the education and prevention programs take effect and incidences of child abuse and neglect diminish.

## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICES

Nisga'a Lisims Government is committed to supporting healthy and economically prosperous Nisga'a communities where children, youth, and adults have hope and opportunities, and access to a safety net that ensures a healthy living standard. NLG assists persons living on Nisga'a Lands by providing equitable access to services while ensuring a basic standard of living. This is accomplished by developing individual and family strengths, and by providing access to services that will enhance their self-sufficiency.

Eight social development programs are funded through the Fiscal Financing Agreement (FFA), with the intent that services are reasonably comparable to those available to residents elsewhere in northwest British Columbia. All programs are delivered by the village social development departments. Programs include: Basic Needs, Special Needs, Guardian Financial Assistance, Adult In-Home Care, National Child Benefit Reinvestment, Training Employment Support Initiatives, Family Violence Prevention, and Community Support Services.

The following programs are funded directly through Nisga'a Child and Family Services: Family Support Services, Recreation Program, Youth Worker Program, Community Preventative Services, and Community Workshops.

During the reporting period, the four Nisga'a communities reported 534,726 community contact hours with children and youth.

### Goals

- Continue to build capacity.
- Improve program accountability through information management service standardization.
- Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of social development programs.
- Develop a joint strategic plan for social development programs.
- Conduct compliance reviews with village program administrators every three years.
- Provide training for social development staff within the four Nisga'a communities.

## HEALTHCARE DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICE DELIVERY

The Nisga'a Valley Health Board was created in 1979. During the 1990's, Canada transferred health service responsibility to the Nisga'a Tribal Council. In 2000, the Nisga'a Final Agreement placed healthcare provision almost completely within the jurisdiction of Nisga'a Lisims Government. By then, the Nisga'a Tribal Council had developed one of the most progressive, efficient, and effective First Nations healthcare organizations in Canada.

Since the treaty, Nisga'a Valley Health Board has evolved into the Nisga'a Valley Health Authority (NVHA) and provides physician services, lab and X-ray, treatment, public health, community health nursing, dental services, mental health services, home care, cultural community health representatives, and the administration of all Non-Insured Health Benefits. With its mission of Daxgadim Gandidils, "Healthy

Bodies/Healthy Minds," NVHA encourages illness prevention, focuses on education and individual empowerment, and promotes interdisciplinary approaches, including traditional practices.

The Nisga'a Valley Health Authority is committed to providing the best healthcare services within its allocated budget. This process has become more challenging and the negative effects of service reductions are beginning to be seen. Increased client usage, suicides and attempted suicides, an increase in high-risk behaviours, and destructive addictions continue to burden the system.

To meet these challenges, NVHA is developing a Nisga'a National Health Plan to reflect the overall health priorities of Nisga'a people and non-Nisga'a residents. The plan identifies milestones at five-, ten-, fifteen-, and twenty-year intervals, and focuses on three streams: chronic disease, mental health, and youth issues.

### Goals

- Complete and launch the Nisga'a National Health Plan.
- Develop a Community Health Plan to align services with the national plan.
- Stabilize and then further develop the Nisga'a Nation's healthcare system.

## IMPROVING PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

On Nisga'a Lands, K-12 education is provided by British Columbia through provincial School District 92 (Nisga'a). The school board consists of four Nisga'a members and one non-Nisga'a member. Nisga'a Lisims Government works in partnership with the district to foster and protect Nisga'a language and culture while seeking to raise the standard of education for all Nass Valley youth.

The Student Success/Literacy Initiative began in 2001 and is grounded in "balanced literacy," which helps ensure students develop a broad range of literacy abilities in spoken language, reading, and writing. A balanced literacy program, combined with technology, has also assisted students with special needs to be more successful in school.

Other literacy initiatives include: Wireless Writers Program, which combines writing and technology to increase computer literacy; and the summer Rec' and Read Program for grades 1–3, which promotes recreational reading.

Throughout the district, British Columbia Performance Standards are used to assess students' writing ability in the fall and spring. Students of School District 92 have improved on both provincial and district assessments. Over the past four years, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations in reading comprehension on the provincial Foundation Skills Assessment has increased as follows:

- Grade 4 – increased from 32% in 2002–2003 to 56% in 2004–2005
- Grade 7 – increased from 15% in 2002–2003 to 27% in 2004–2005

The percentage of Nisga'a students graduating from high school continues to rise. The provincial average of Aboriginal completion is 48%. School District 92 is performing well above that average at 63% Aboriginal completion in 2004–2005. This is a 9% increase from last year and a 21% increase since the Effective Date of the Nisga'a Final Agreement (school year 2000–2001).

Adults are also taking up the challenge of obtaining their high school completion certificates. Each Nisga'a Village has a school district adult education centre. These centres have become significant community assets with qualified, dedicated staff and more than 100 students enrolled.

### Goals

- Continue to improve the academic results of students.
- Continue to expand Nisga'a language instruction.
- Improve computer literacy.
- Enhance programs for adults who wish to obtain their high school completion certificates.

## EXPANDING POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a (Nisga'a House of Wisdom) Institute offers Nisga'a-based post-secondary programs in Nisga'a communities and Urban Societies. Serving both Nisga'a and non-Nisga'a students, Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a (WWN) partners with a number of public institutions for the delivery of programs. Scholars from around the world have come to the Nass Valley to study at this institution of higher learning.

Through a federation agreement with the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), WWN offers a Bachelor of Arts in First Nations Studies-Nisga'a, a Northern Advancement Program that helps new university entrants prepare for academic success, and an Education Diploma in Nisga'a Language and Culture. Through an affiliation agreement with Northwest Community College, WWN also offers vocational and technical training, Grade 12 achievement, university/college preparation, Carpentry/Timber Framing, and continuing education programs. Since 1994, WWN students have gone on to earn 19 Bachelor of Arts degrees, one Bachelor of Commerce degree, 36 Nisga'a Studies certificates, 25 First Nations Studies certificates, and one First Nations Language certificate.

During the reporting period, WWN was busy developing plans for its next ten years, including a plan to build a campus complete with faculty and student housing and daycare facilities. WWN continued course development in the First Nations Studies program and expanded vocational, technical, and trades programs. WWN is also exploring the development of new programs, such as Nisga'a Recreation and Tourism, Early Childhood Education, and Archival and Curatorial Studies.

WWN's annual budget is $ 1.3 million. Under the terms of the Nisga'a Fiscal Financing Agreement, British Columbia contributed $226,000 and Canada contributed $251,650 to Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a for the support of post-secondary education and training programs. Additionally, Canada contributed $158,700 through the Indian Studies Support Program while British Columbia, in partnership with UNBC, contributed a further $81,000.

Nisga'a Lisims Government also funds Nisga'a students pursuing post-secondary education throughout British Columbia and North America.

## ENSURING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Nisga'a Lisims Government's Access to Justice Department supports Nisga'a citizens in the prevention and resolution of conflicts through increased awareness of Ayuukhl Nisga'a and Canadian laws and legal processes. Funded by Canada, the Access to Justice Department works in partnership with other organizations and manages the following programs.

The **Aboriginal Justice Program** is designed to assist in the monitoring of adults on supervision orders with British Columbia's Corrections Branch, liaise and maintain communication between Nisga'a communities and personnel in the Canadian justice system, access community needs in the area of justice, and explore ways to meet those needs. The Aboriginal Justice Program encourages the revival of Nisga'a traditional ways of dealing with conflict and ensures Nisga'a communities have access to relevant legal information and services.

The **Yuuhlimk'askw Program** is offered to Nisga'a communities to provide culturally appropriate alternative justice solutions. Yuuhlimk'askw (a Nisga'a way of counselling, guiding, cautioning, and supporting community members) is a proactive approach which involves the community in exploring the underlying causes of behavioural problems.

The **Lisims Nass Valley RCMP Victim Services Program** provides a source of emotional support to victims of crime in their recovery and involvement with the justice process, information about the justice system, and liaison with Crown Counsel to assist with court orientation.

### Goals

- Encourage and facilitate access to the Yuuhlimk'askw Program in dealing with conflicts between individuals and their families.
- Develop a public legal education strategy.
- Develop legal advocacy services.

# 4 PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

AS THE NISGA'A NATION CHARTS A COURSE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, ONE OF ITS GUIDING PRINCIPLES IS A COMMITMENT TO ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP. NISGA'A LISIMS GOVERNMENT WORKS WITH CANADA AND BRITISH COLUMBIA TO SAFEGUARD THE NISGA'A NATION'S NATURAL RESOURCES FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.

## FOREST STEWARDSHIP

Ecological sustainability is a prime consideration in the development and approval of all operations within Nisga'a Lands and the *Nisga'a Forest Act* sets high standards to maintain biodiversity. The Nisga'a Final Agreement requires that forest practices meet or exceed existing British Columbia standards. This involves implementing a total, integrated, and quantifiable forest management program, developing strategies to meet the requirements set in the *Nisga'a Forest Act* and Land Use Plans.

## WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Nisga'a hunting rights can be exercised in the 16,101 square kilometre Nass Wildlife Area. The Nass Wildlife Committee, a tripartite body created under the Nisga'a Final Agreement, provides advice about wildlife management and harvest within the Nass Wildlife Area. British Columbia uses this information to establish annual harvest levels and approve the annual Nass Wildlife Management Plan.

Nisga'a Lisims Government manages wildlife for long-term health and vitality. Moose, mountain goat, and grizzly bear have been identified as "Initial Designated Species" and the Nisga'a Nation receives an annual hunting allocation of these species. Nisga'a citizens have the right to hunt other wildlife species in accordance with the Nisga'a Final Agreement, subject to conservation and laws for the purpose of public health and safety. Holders of traplines both outside and within Nisga'a Lands continue to exercise their trapping rights in accordance with federal and provincial laws of general application.

During the reporting period, British Columbia granted $90,000 to NLG for a moose population survey to be conducted in 2006.

## SWAMP POINT AGGREGATE MINE PROJECT

During the reporting period, NLG's Lands and Fisheries staff and representatives from British Columbia met with Ascot Resources Ltd., the proponents of the Swamp Point project. The proposal includes the extraction of 3,000,000 tonnes of gravel per year from Portland Canal for export to California. British Columbia and NLG reviewed the proposal, and outlined the environmental assessment process and related provisions of the Nisga'a Final Agreement.

Although the project is estimated to provide fulltime employment for between 25 and 35 people, NLG will only approve the project if it meets strict guidelines for environmental protection. If the project passes the environmental review, construction of infrastructure is scheduled to begin in 2006. Both NLG Lands and Fisheries staff will continue to participate in the Environmental Assessment Working Group.

## BEAR RIVER GRAVEL

At the end of the reporting period, Nisga'a Lisims Government was notified of the environmental assessment of this project. NLG will fully participate in the assessment process to ensure Nisga'a Lands, fish, and wildlife are fully protected.

## KLAPPAN COAL

Although this project is located outside the Nass Area on the opposite side of Mount Klappan from Magoonhl Lisims (Nass Lake), NLG will be monitoring this environmental assessment process to ensure Nisga'a interests are not affected. NLG may become more involved as the assessment moves forward.

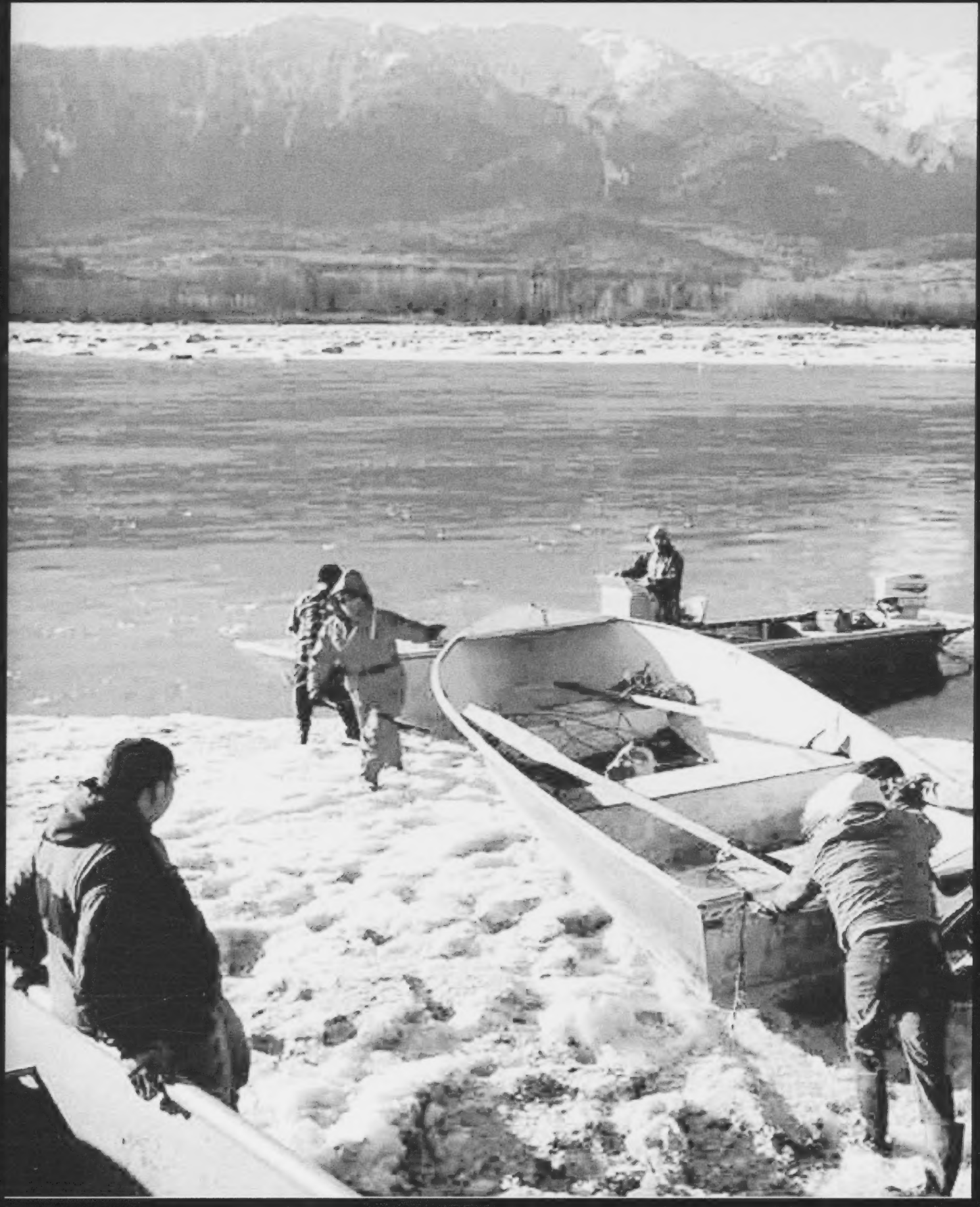
## OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS AGREEMENT

During the reporting period, the Nisga'a Nation and the Province of British Columbia signed a 'Protocol Respecting Offshore Oil and Gas.' Further discussions are anticipated to determine next steps under the Protocol. The Protocol expires on December 31, 2006.

In addition, dialogue amongst NLG, British Columbia, and Canada has been established and is ongoing.

DIM AAMA-GA'ATDIËHL HAŃIIJOḴ TḠUNA... TX̱AAŃITKWSHL YATS'ISKW, TX̱AAŃITKWSHL WIL KSI-ḠALḠOLHL AKS AHL TX̱AP'AX̱-K̲'ALII-AKSKW, II TS'EETS'IKS TGUNA WIL ŃII-WILIË GANS DIP ŃISIË. **WE MUST TAKE CARE OF THIS EARTH— ALL THE ANIMALS, EVERY STREAM IN THE VALLEY—AND THIS LAND ON WHICH YOU AND I LIVE.**

— Ayuukhl Nisga'a



# 5 SAFEGUARDING A CULTURE

**NISG̱A'A LISIMS GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO PROTECTING AND PROMOTING NISG̱A'A CULTURE IN ALL ASPECTS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT. THE AYUUK̓HL NISG̱A'A, ALONG WITH THE WISDOM OF THE ELDERS, FORMS THE FOUNDATION OF NISG̱A'A CULTURE.**

## AYUUK̓HL NISG̱A'A DEPARTMENT

The Ayuukhl Nisga'a Department (AND) was created to protect, preserve, and promote Nisga'a language, culture, and history. The department's vision is to ensure Nisga'a people are spiritually, socially, economically, and politically healthy, and empowered by a thorough understanding of what it means to be Nisga'a.

"We must take great care of our own way of life — which is based on the Nisga'a Ayuuk — for we have a responsibility to ensure that it is passed on, as it should be, to our children who follow behind us... Attend public functions, so that you may hear the wisdom of the people who speak. Knowledge and wisdom, counsel and guidance, are what stabilize the community and the (Nass) valley."

— Ayuukhl Nisg̱a'a

The work of AND supports the cultural integrity of every program and service delivered through Nisg̱a'a Lisims Government. This is achieved by preserving the past and ensuring that Nisg̱a'a knowledge and traditions inform government practices. AND provides interpretation of Nisg̱a'a language and culture, empowering Nisg̱a'a people with a broader understanding of their unique identity.

This is achieved through:

- development and maintenance of a catalogue system for Nisg̱a'a archives
- resource and administrative support for the Council of Elders
- resource support for various NLG committees
- liaison and negotiations with the Royal British Columbia Museum, the Royal Ontario Museum, and the Smithsonian Institute, and
- research and production of books on key aspects of Nisg̱a'a culture.

During the reporting period, portions of the Ayuukhl Nisg̱a'a were transcribed for the first time. An oral heritage, the Ayuuk has been passed down from generation to generation through the spoken word. Nisg̱a'a Lisims Government, recognizing that most Nisg̱a'a people no longer speak the Nisg̱a'a language, moved to preserve this unique legacy while the full knowledge and nuance of the language is still present in Nisg̱a'a communities.

This process helps safeguard Nisg̱a'a heritage for future generations.

### Goals

- Increase use of AND services by all Nisg̱a'a departments.
- Complete the development of the archival catalogue system.
- Develop additional documentation of Nisg̱a'a traditions.

CULTURALLY, OUR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE REVIVING DANCES AND TRADITIONS THAT HAVEN'T BEEN SEEN FOR FIFTY YEARS.

THEY DANCE AND WALK IN BOTH WORLDS.

PRESIDENT NELSON LEESON
SIMOOGIT AXLAAWAALS
NISGA'A LISIMS GOVERNMENT

The Nisga'a Final Agreement is British Columbia's first modern treaty. A landmark in the relationship between Canada and its First Nations peoples, the treaty went into effect on May 11, 2000.

The governments of Canada, British Columbia, and the Nisga'a Nation are parties to the Nisga'a Final Agreement, which sets out Nisga'a Lands and the Nisga'a people's right of self-government. Because three governments share responsibility for implementing the treaty, an Implementation Committee was formed to provide a forum for sharing information and ideas, and to ensure the treaty's implementation. This report summarises the progress made in the fifth year of the treaty, from April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005.

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Canada

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